

Presentation of the Proceedings

I was very pleased and honoured to host the VWorld Congress on Mummy Studies in Turin.

In recent years, the study of mummified remains has attracted the attention of the general public and researchers of different cultural extractions for new interpretations which, far from being of sterile scientific curiosity, are of great anthropological interest and help to enrich our knowledge of the Biological History of Man.

The topics discussed, although mainly dealing with the past, have also led to the resolution of current problems in Medicine and Biology. In fact, we can read in mummies not only our history but also a significant part of our future. For instance, the study of past diseases can contribute to the epidemiological interpretation of current ones.

Turin has a long tradition of anthropological studies of ancient populations, particularly Egyptians because of the many collections of mummies and skeletons that have enriched the two main museums of the city through the years, the Museum of Anthropology and the Egyptian Museum. These collections assume the important role of true biological archives and, in a global description of man, permit the integration of historical data with those from bioanthropological research.

The anthropological collections were assembled by Giovanni Marro during the excavation campaigns of the Italian Archeological Mission in Egypt conducted from 1903 to 1920 by Ernesto Schiaparelli, Director of the Egyptian Museum of Turin, and then from 1930 to 1937 by his successor Giulio Farina. Marro was the only one who combined archeological and anthropological research.

The Egyptian anthropological collections are now housed in the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the University and in the Egyptian Museum of Turin; the two

museums are linked by an almost one hundred-year collaboration.

The VWorld Congress on Mummy Studies considered all aspects of research on mummified human and animal bodies, from both the biological and cultural point of view, in order to reconstruct the global anthropological history of ancient populations.

New sophisticated technologies are constantly being applied to these ancient remains in order to develop research methods that will generate more information while simultaneously helping to preserve the specimens under study. The aim of the Congress was to unite researchers working in different fields in different countries to exchange information and to hold in-depth discussions on topics of mummified remains. The scope ranged from research problems and limitations with mummified remains to conservation and the application of highly sophisticated technology in mummy research, such as DNA analysis and non-invasive three-dimensional computerized imaging.

The joy of welcoming the participants in the Congress and of opening the proceedings was veiled by sadness for the death of Eve Cockburn. I want to take the occasion to underline the great contribution Eve made to the development of the Paleopathology Association and the attention she always paid to the study of mummies.

The Congress brought together more than 200 scientists and the presented papers, collected in the present volume, will certainly arouse the interest of the reader.

Finally, I wish to give my heartfelt thanks to the Vice-Presidents, to the Scientific Committee for its valuable collaboration, and to all the participants for their warm and expert involvement which greatly contributed to the success of the Congress.

Emma Rabino Massa